

HARIJAN

Editor : MAHADEV DESAI

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[FIVE PICE

A CHALLENGE

(By M. K. Gandhi)

I have before me three letters rebuking me for not going to Sindh to face the Hurs personally. Two are friendly. The third comes from a critic who has no faith in non-violence. His letter demands an answer. Its main part runs as follows:

"I am deeply interested in your writings and in the effect that they make upon the minds of the ignorant masses and your blind followers. I would therefore feel obliged if you enlighten me on the following points, especially because points nos. 3 & 4 raise novel and fundamental issues about non-violence.

"You have been training a number of satyagrahis in your Ashram and they must have had the advantage of your supervision and instructions. You have been proclaiming that violence could be effectively met by non-violent means. Japan is now attacking India in the East and Hurs are creating trouble in the West. Is this not then the long-awaited opportunity when you can practise what you have so long preached?

"Instead of doing that, you are contenting yourself by writing articles in the *Harijan*. Imagine Hitler or Stalin, without sending their armies to the front line, writing such articles in *Pravda* or such other paper. Instead of asking the Sindh M. L. A. s. to resign and go to the Hurs, why should you not send a 'company' of your trained satyagrahis and try the luck of your doctrine?

"Is it not the duty and business of a satyagrahi to go and meet the danger where it exists and threatens the country? Or is it your case that your satyagrahis will meet it only when it reaches the Ashram and not before? If so, is not your doctrine a doctrine of inaction?"

I have no doubt that if I could have gone to Sindh, I might have been able to do something. I have done such things before, not without success. But I am too old for such missions. What little energy I have, I am storing up for what promises to be the last fight of my life.

I have not conceived my mission to be that of a knight-errant wandering everywhere to deliver people from difficult situations. My humble occupation has been to show people how they can solve their own difficulties. So far as Sindh is concerned, I maintain that my advice was perfect. It was clearly Congressmen's duty to proceed to the infested areas and spend themselves in the effort to convert the Hurs to the way of peace. Indeed they could have used arms if they had no faith in non-violence. They should have resigned from the Congress to free themselves from the obligation to observe non-violence. If we are to be fit for independence, we have to learn the art of self-

defence either non-violently or violently. Every citizen should consider himself liable to render help to his neighbour in distress.

If I had adopted the role my critic has suggested, I would have helped people to become parasites. Therefore it is well that I have not trained myself to defend others. I shall be satisfied if at my death it could be said of me that I had devoted the best part of my life to showing the way to become self-reliant and cultivate the capacity to defend oneself under every conceivable circumstance.

My correspondent has committed the grave error of thinking that my mission is to deliver people from calamities. That is an arrogation only claimed by dictators. But no dictator has ever succeeded in proving the claim.

Indeed if I could say, as the correspondent thinks I could, that if the menaces of the kind described by him face the Ashram, it will give a good account of itself, I should be quite content and feel that my mission was wholly successful. But I can lay no such claim. The Ashram at Sevagram is only so-called. The visitors gave it the name and it has passed current. The Ashram is a medly of people come together for different purposes. There are hardly half a dozen permanent residents having a common ideal. How these few will discharge themselves when the test comes remains to be seen.

The fact is that non-violence does not work in the same way as violence. It works in the opposite way. An armed man naturally relies upon his arms. A man who is intentionally unarmed relies upon the unseen force called God by poets, but called the unknown by scientists. But that which is unknown is not necessarily non-existent. God is the Force among all forces known and unknown. Non-violence without reliance upon that Force is poor stuff to be thrown in the dust.

I hope now my critic realises the error underlying his question and that he sees also that the doctrine that has guided my life is not one of inaction but of the highest action. His question should really have been put thus:

How is it that, in spite of your work in India for over 22 years, there are not sufficient satyagrahis who can cope with external and internal menaces? My answer then would be that twentytwo years are nothing in the training of a nation for the development of non-violent strength. That is not to say that a large number of persons will not show that strength on due occasion. That occasion seems to have come now. This war puts the civilian on his mettle no less than the military man, non-violent no less than the violent.

Sevagram, 18-6-42

THE PRESSURE OF LOVE

I extract the following from a correspondent's Gujarati letter:

"Our little village was the scene of an event last week. Two of the leading men in our village were drink-addicts. Their sons who are reformers could not bear this. The fathers would not listen to the sons' entreaties. So the sons went on a fast refusing to have any food until the fathers promised to give up drink. This created a stir in the village. After a day of the fast the fathers promised privately before a few friends to give up drink. The sons refused to accept this promise as satisfactory, and insisted on a pledge being taken before a public meeting of the villagers. After two days the fathers relented and agreed to pledge themselves publicly never to touch drink. Shri Gordhandas Chokhawala who was here was invited to preside over the public meeting held for the purpose, and the sons thereafter broke the fast.

"This is all very well. But I do not know if the sons were right in coercing their fathers. Is not this coercion violence? My own father is a drink-addict. I have tried hard and long to wean him from the habit, but in vain. But these my cousins have succeeded and their action has had a great effect in the village and its neighbourhood. May I follow in their footsteps? I was not sure of the ethical correctness of the course, otherwise I too should have joined them. But your word would be enough for me. I would request you to deal with this letter in *Harijanbandhu*, so that your advice may be acted upon by young men like me."

I am sure there was no coercion involved in the step taken by the young men, and I am equally sure that it has Gandhiji's blessings and he would commend it to all young people who have the misfortune to have their nearest and dearest ones in the grip of a vice. Satyagraha in the domestic field is a well-tried and unexceptionable remedy. There are a few obvious conditions. The short-coming it is aimed against must be an intolerable vice amounting to a disgrace and working the physical and moral ruin of the addict. Then there should be an indissoluble bond of affection between the parties. It is the right of service and affection that entitles the children and wards to exercise this moral pressure on their parents or guardians. The other condition is that they should have exhausted all other remedies which include repeated requests and entreaties, more devoted service, and giving the dear ones visible demonstration of one's mental pain by giving up one's favourite dishes or one meal, and so on, briefly anything short of a complete fast. Non-cooperation of a sort can also be applied. I have known a sister who non-cooperated with her husband and patiently suffered the consequences thereof for a number of years in order to wean him from vice, and the husband was completely won over as a result of her suffering. If even after all possible gentle measures have been employed the parents or guardians or other dear ones persist, fasting may be legitimately resorted to. There should be no anger and no resentment, there should be

utmost love. The dear ones should be made to feel that their persistence in the vice gives the relatives deep pain so much so that it becomes impossible for them to eat and drink and carry on as usual until the unpleasant thing that divides them is removed. The greater their earnestness and affection the quicker and more abiding will be the result. Let me tell the correspondent that this form of Satyagraha has, to my knowledge, been successfully used not only by children against their parents, but by parents against children, by husbands against wives and *vice versa*. Being the purest type of weapon it can be used by all those who are fired with love, who have no axe to grind, and only the highest end to serve.

The young men in question were right in insisting on the pledge being taken in public. There is shame in persisting in vice, no shame in owning it up and declaring it from the housetops that one is free from it. This public avowal gives one a measure of moral strength and is sufficient protection against a temptation to break the pledge.

Sevagram, 22-6-42

M. D.

CASUAL NOTES

"Extraordinary Blindness"

Lin Yutang, the distinguished Chinese author who has made his mark in the domain of English letters, is the last person to be charged with pro-Japanese sympathies or with a defeatist mentality. He has written an article in the 25th anniversary issue of *Asia* on the necessity of a Union Now (of China) with India as a counterblast to Clarence Streit's cry of "Union Now" (of U. S. A.) with Britain. We are not now concerned with the idea of an Asiatic Federation,—not at any rate so long as the principal Asiatic nation—Japan—is out for totalitarian fascism. But some of the home-truths he has uttered must be laid to heart by every Britisher. He deplores that "both the United States and Great Britain have not changed in their attitude to Asia", and he is therefore worried not so much about the outcome of the war as about the outcome of the peace. He refers to what he calls "the extraordinary blindness of the British Government with regard to Asia", "shown not so much by the inadequate defence of Singapore as by the complacency with which that inadequacy is excused, and apparently accepted." Malay and Singapore were lost, he says on the authority of British Cabinet Ministers, not due to "neglect" but to "deliberate choice". And yet, says Lin Yutang, both the United States and Great Britain "expect to go on colonizing every Asiatic when the war is over." "What is happening," he asks, "inside the minds of the Malays and the Indians and the Burmese and the Chinese? Are the white Imperialists going to stage a comeback?"

The inference to be drawn from these apparently contradictory statements is that neither America nor Britain can afford to lose these "colonies", and it is part of their strategy to lose them now in order to win them back as "colonies", rather than to win an honourable victory by freeing these and letting them fight as equal Allies.

"Democracy today has its chance," he concludes warning them, "and democracy may forfeit it. The Atlantic Charter has been promised to all countries subjected by Hitler. The Atlantic Charter must be equally promised to all countries subjected by England, or we shall run into another and greater world catastrophe."

One vital correction is needed in this warning. The Atlantic Charter must not be *promised* — Germany and Japan also can make and are making big promises — but it must be *applied now* at this very moment, if the Allies are to have a moral victory which alone counts and which alone can ensure a stable peace.

Stop the Traditional Game

A writer in the *New Statesman and Nation* sounds a similar warning and refers pointedly to the expectation of "traditional England" "that at the end of this war, with the aid of the Chinese, American, and Dutch, it is going to recover its traditional Empire in which everything will go on as before." "Our reverses in Malay and Burma mean not merely that on the spot we were ill-prepared and ill-led: they mean that by our own faults of racial arrogance and aloofness our leadership over these peoples has passed from us. We may, if we have the grace to mend our ways, become in the future their allies, friends and helpers, but only on condition that we abandon our traditional claim to rule over them." The mention of Dominion Status serves, he says, but as "an irritant and a symbol of insincerity." "In the past all our offers were qualified by reservations which in effect enabled and even invited the minorities to put their veto on any advance. What Indians chiefly mean by 'independence' is that we should cease to play this traditional game of divide to rule." Alas, the writer did not know then that even before the ink on his paper was dry the British were preparing to play the last (one hopes it was the last) move in that game, viz., the Cripps' proposals. It is therefore that Gandhiji would have no more offer from them, neither the promise of Independence nor any schemes for India's "future Freedom," as they love to describe it, but only an orderly withdrawal leaving us alone to do what we like with ourselves.

Another Game

A Chinese resident in Britain gives through the columns of the same weekly a warning against another game that the British are playing, little knowing that Japan has all along profited by it. "Each time when a city in the Far East is evacuated, the population is invariably divided between the Europeans (which illogically includes the Americans) on the one hand, and the 'coloured people' (with 'natives' and 'Asiatics' as alternatives) on the other. Behind this rough classification I fear that there is still the old white men's consciousness lurking. It is unpleasant but true to say that the Japanese propagandists have exploited this time-worn generalisation with some success."

"Are there," he asks, "any colourless people on earth except those standing in Madame Tussaud's?"

Of all colours, nothing frightens me more than wax! Be one's face a Devon apple, a half-ripen tomato, or a brownish dumpling, there is always so much more life." He recognises what Britain is doing for China, and says, "with such a rosy picture in mind, I venture to suggest that we should uproot the colour-bias."

That, I should think, is an extraordinarily mildly worded warning. The stark fact, as we have known it to our cost, is that the bias is there not only in outward verbal expression but corrupts their daily life — even their behaviour in organising to win this war! The war, they should know, cannot be won, except "ye be converted" and "born again" Sevagram, 18-6-42 M. D.

Notes

Independence Ensures Speedy Victory

Asked by the Reuter's London representative to amplify his statement about the possibility of Free India entering into a treaty with the United Nations, Gandhiji said:

"There can be no limit to what friendly Independent India can do. I had in mind a treaty between United Nations and India for defence of China against Japanese aggression. But given mutual goodwill and trust, the treaty should cover protection of human dignity and rights by means other than resort to armament. For this involves competition in capacity for greatest slaughter. I wish British opinion could realise that Independence of India changes character of Allied cause and ensures speedier victory."

Deliberate Distortion

Replying to the criticism of the London *Times* on his latest proposal Gandhiji said: "Every time nationalists have suggested solutions however sound intrinsically there has been distortion of their speeches and writings, followed later by persecution. My latest proposal conceived in the friendliest spirit and in my opinion intrinsically sound has already begun to be distorted. I regard my proposal as fool-proof. The operations of the Allied forces against Japanese aggression have been left intact under my proposal which amounts to this that Britain should become true to her declaration, withdraw from India as conqueror and therefore controller of her destiny, and leave India to shape her own destiny without the slightest interference. This, as I can see, puts her case on a moral basis and gives her in India a great ally not in the cause of Imperialism but in the cause of human freedom. If there is anarchy in India, Britain alone will be responsible, not I. What I have said is that I would prefer anarchy to the present slavery and consequent impotence of India. Any person, however great he may be, who distorts the proposals I have made will be condemned by history as an enemy of the Allied cause. Sir Stafford Cripps' proposals have been weighed by India and after great deliberation rejected by all parties. It is an insult to India to repeat those proposals as the final word of British statesmanship."

Sevagram, 21-5-42

HARIJAN

June 28

1942

A POSER

(By M. K. Gandhi)

A correspondent writes to Mahadev Desai :

"Referring to Gandhiji's demand for an orderly withdrawal of the British from India or for a complete and immediate ending of the British rule in this country, some friends here want to clearly understand the implications of the suggestion that on free India becoming an ally of the United Nations, British and American troops may remain on Indian soil and operate from her under a treaty with free India, because defence of India will be then our 'common cause'. Theoretically from the standpoint of India's independence the position is no doubt quite clear. But some questions arise as to its practical implications. It is of course understood that Gandhiji here is not stating his personal non-violent position but is visualising one of the possibilities, namely, that of a free nationalist India going in for a policy of armed resistance or of collaboration of some kind with foreign troops in armed resistance, to aggression. But what about the British position? A cordial acceptance of Gandhiji's demand by the British will not only completely change the moral basis of the war but will in fact negative, for them, its political and economic *sine-qua-non*. If the British are not driven out of India by force of circumstances, but they give up their hold on India as a voluntary repayment of a debt long overdue, this moral act cannot, by its very nature, be an isolated one, but should fundamentally affect Britain's relations with her other Asiatic and African possessions also. If Britain is forced to leave India to God or to the Japanese she will go on fighting to save her other possessions in Asia and Africa and to regain those already lost; but if she voluntarily dispossesses herself of her ill-gotten properties, her *material* reasons for prosecuting the war will practically vanish. From the economic point of view, Britain could never inflict upon herself this terrible costly war if she did not hope afterwards to reimburse herself somehow out of the possessions she was fighting to retain. It will be absolutely beyond the resources of Britain, divested of her foreign possessions, to carry on the war on anything like its present scale. To try to do that would be a most senseless and inhuman infliction on the British people themselves.

"As regards *ideal* reasons, these have no substance now, because so long as Britain is holding millions upon millions of human beings in subjugation she has no right to speak for democracy, etc. But the *ideal* reasons will gain substantiality on Britain responding to Gandhiji's appeal. And then it is true Britain may look forward to the sympathy and co-operation of the peoples she will have freed and may to some extent rely on their resources too. But just here we are brought face to face with the old question of means and ends, namely, whether war can be a proper and

effective instrument of policy for the attainment of the democratic ends of justice and human freedom. It would be a disaster if anything were said or done that would give rise to a misunderstanding on this issue so as to jeopardise or prejudice the historic lead which Gandhiji has given in this matter to the world at this unprecedented crisis in human affairs. On no account can that moral world-leadership be endangered. Why does not Gandhiji persist in the line which he enunciated sometime ago, namely, that the voluntary abdication of the British power in respect of her imperial possessions is sure to bring about a moral situation in the world that will baffle Hitler and Mussolini and their war machines? The voluntary liquidation of British Imperialism in India, if it comes about, will be a tremendous act of non-violence on the part of the British. When we are visualising its effect, why should we not think in terms of non-violence also? If the tree is non-violence the fruit also should be non-violence.

"There are so many side issues arising from the question of allowing foreign troops on Indian soil. Foreign troops cannot at all function in this part of the world without India being made a vast arsenal and supply-base for the United Nations. Any suggestion, however tentative and hypothetical, in this direction is fraught with danger.

"While Gandhiji is desperately anxious to prove his *bona fides* as to his determination to keep the Japanese out, his utterances regarding the future position of foreign troops in India are likely to be misunderstood by the other party who may be already seeking an opening for bargaining. Not that negotiations as such are objectionable, but if the other party's approach is vitiated by the spirit of bargaining, that will not only detract from the value of the British action, if any, but will also introduce unwanted complications on the Indian side. The effect on the mind of the Indian masses has also to be taken into consideration. At this stage of the new movement it is most essential to attune the public mind to the thought and conviction that India must get ready to fall back exclusively upon her own resources, moral and material. Can we at this psychological moment emphasise a possibility which will suggest to the man in the street that 'after all they will be here'? The mind of the man in the street will hardly be able to juxtapose national freedom and the presence of thousands and thousands of foreign troops in the country."

This letter demands an answer. The difficulty about the confusion in the public mind by the contemplated stay of the Allied troops in the country is very real. Neither the masses nor even the classes will appreciate the necessity of the military operations of the Allied powers after the declaration of withdrawal. But if the necessity is proved, the public may be expected to reconcile themselves to the inevitable.

There was obviously a gap in my first writing. I filled it in as soon as it was discovered by one of my numerous interviewers. Non-violence demands the strictest honesty, cost what it may. The public have therefore to suffer my weakness, if weakness it may be called. I could not be guilty of asking

the Allies to take a step which would involve certain defeat. I could not guarantee fool-proof non-violent action to keep the Japanese at bay. Abrupt withdrawal of the Allied troops might result in Japan's occupation of India and China's sure fall. I had not the remotest idea of any such catastrophe resulting from my action. Therefore I feel that if in spite of the acceptance of my proposal, it is deemed necessary by the Allies to remain in India to prevent Japanese occupation, they should do so, subject to such conditions as may be prescribed by the national government that may be set up after the British withdrawal.

The writer's argument about Britain having no cause left for pursuing the war, if she accepts my proposal and logically follows it in Africa, is sound. But that is the acid test proposed. India has every right to examine the implications of high-sounding declarations about justice, preservation of democracy and freedom of speech and individual liberty. If a band of robbers have among themselves a democratic constitution in order to enable them to carry on their robbing operations more effectively, they do not deserve to be called a democracy. Is India a democracy? Are the States a democracy? Britain does not deserve to win the war on the ground of justice if she is fighting to keep her Asiatic and African possessions. I am not unaware of the tremendous change in Britain's economic policy that the acceptance of my proposal involves. But that change is a vital necessity, if this war is to have a satisfactory ending.

Who knows if Britain's acceptance of my proposal will not by itself mean an honourable end of the war resulting in a change even in the mentality of the Axis powers?

The writer is afraid that my reconciliation to the presence of the British troops would mean a descent on my part from my non-violent position. I hold that my non-violence dictates a recognition of the vital necessity. Neither Britain nor America share my faith in non-violence. I am unable to state that the non-violent effort will make India proof against Japanese or any other aggression. I am not able even to claim that the whole of India is non-violent in the sense required. In the circumstances it would be hypocritical on my part to insist on the immediate withdrawal of the Allied troops as an indispensable part of my proposal. It is sufficient for me to declare that so far as India is concerned, she does not need troops to defend herself, having no quarrel with Japan. But India must not by any act of hers short of national suicide let China down or put the Allied powers in jeopardy. So long therefore as India lacks faith in the capacity of non-violence to protect her against aggression from without, the demand for the withdrawal of the Allied troops during the pendency of the war would itself be an act of violence, if the controllers of the troops hold it to be necessary for their defence to keep them in India for that purpose and that alone.

Sevagram, 22-6-42

TWO ACTIONS

(By M. K. Gandhi)

My proposal for the withdrawal of the British power involves two actions. One is to deal with the present emergency, and the other to secure freedom from British supremacy. The second admits of delay. There is a lot of confusion about its implications. I am trying to the best of my ability to deal with the questions as they arise from time to time.

The first admits of no delay and demands specific action irrespective of the proposal for British withdrawal. This is in connection with (1) the behaviour of troops, (2) the impending salt famine, (3) control of food grains, (4) evacuation for the sake of the military, (5) discrimination between Europeans and Anglo-Indians and Anglo-Burmans on the one hand and Indians on the other.

On the first item the people have the law and public opinion wholly on their side. The Government machinery is always slow to move, more so now, when it is all pre-mortgaged for military preparations. People must everywhere learn to defend themselves against misbehaving individuals, no matter who they are. The question of non-violence and violence does not arise. No doubt the non-violent way is always the best, but where that does not come naturally the violent way is both necessary and honourable. Inaction here is rank cowardice and unmanly. It must be shunned at all cost. Pandit Nehru told me that at the stations in the north, platform hawkers have banded themselves for self-defence, so the troops are careful at those stations.

As to salt famine, the law is not quite on the people's side but right is wholly on their side. I am hoping that the Government will put the widest construction on the clause referring to salt in Gandhi-Irwin pact and allow people to manufacture salt wherever they can. And I would advise them to manufacture salt even at the risk of prosecution. Necessity knows no law. A starving man will help himself to food wherever he finds it. Rishi Vishwamitra did so.

Number three is difficult to deal with. But the same rule applies as to the second. Food cannot be manufactured as easily as salt. It is up to the merchants to band themselves to do what they can and force the hands of the Government to do the right thing by suggesting wise rules for the supply of food to the poor people at fixed prices. If this is not done in time looting shops is sure to be a daily event.

As to four, I have no doubt that the authorities may not ask people to vacate except where they are ready to offer equivalent land and buildings and cart the people and their belongings to the places prepared for them and pay them a living wage till they find suitable occupation. The people, if they have nowhere to move to, should simply refuse to vacate and suffer the consequences.

As to the fifth, the people should refuse to submit to discrimination and it will break down. Most of these difficulties take place because we have cultivated the habit of submitting to them. In the words of the late Lord Willingdon, we must learn resolutely to say 'no', when that is the real answer possible and take the consequence. Sevagram, 22-6-42

"THE COMMUNAL TRIANGLE"*

The Communal Triangle in India is the pregnant title of a book on our communal problem by two of our distinguished socialists. It is a remarkable contribution to the study of a problem which has baffled our best leaders, and though the book has been published over the authorship of two, it is acknowledged to be the result of the joint labours of several socialist friends whose harmonious collaboration in jail has borne such rich fruit. Study of our social, economic and political problems has become a rare virtue in these days, what with the preoccupations of the struggle for our freedom and what with our lack of emphasis on patient and tireless study of facts and figures which used to be the forte of our stalwarts like Dadabhai and Wacha, Gokhale and Joshi. The charge that our labours since 1920 have lacked study is well-founded. This book into the making of which have gone infinite cooperative labour, study and research, will be a considerable answer to that charge. Every possible source of information has been tapped, important literature on the subject, not only in English and other foreign languages, but in Hindustani, Persian and Marathi has been utilised, and the result is history which, as Buchan has said, is not only a science but an art, "a synthesis rather than a compilation, an interpretation as well as a chronicle".

The book has, as I have said, a pregnant title. The phrase 'the eternal triangle' is well-known, and the havoc that the third party works in the life of a married couple is incalculable. Often the disaster is irretrievable, unless the two who have plighted their troth to each other recover their senses and eliminate the third, or the third repents and eliminates himself or herself. The third side which the authors have rightly described as the base of our communal triangle has played the disastrous part of the third party in 'the eternal triangle', and the conclusion is irresistible that as soon as the base is eliminated there will be no basis left for the perpetual troubles between the two, who for good or ill plighted their troth to each other centuries ago. Gandhiji, temperamentally accustomed to looking for the cause of our ills in ourselves rather than outside, made his best endeavour to rivet the attention of his countrymen for over a quarter century on our own failings and shortcomings and on our duty. But failure of his intensive prayerful effort has now driven him to the conclusion that unless the *fons et origo mali* is removed, the disease cannot be eradicated. It is not with a light heart that he came to that painful conclusion. The last straw on the camel's back was the Cripps' proposals constituting the climax of the diabolical process of *divide et impera*, and he returned from Delhi with the decision made up in his own mind that there was no salvation for this stricken land without a withdrawal of its imperialist masters. The authors of the book have traced the history of the operation of this disastrous policy ever since the British gained their foothold in India, with such wealth of detail,

such masterly analysis, and such accuracy that any dispassionate reader, Hindu or Muslim, should come to the same conclusion that they have arrived. It is remarkable that the book was given to the press before the climax of the Cripps' proposals came upon us, and months before Gandhiji raised his life-giving slogan asking the British to withdraw; but the conclusion they have arrived at is absolutely identical. "It is for this reason," they say at the end of a revealing description of the 'the British arm of the Triangle', "that the Congress has always thrown out the challenge that the first condition for a speedy settlement of the Hindu Muslim differences is that the third party of the triangle should withdraw unconditionally and give the two parties an honest chance to face each other's fears and demands." Again: "the fact is that whatever form of government or constitutional arrangements we want in this country, if they are to be based on the people's consent, then we can never get them as long as the British are masters in our house." Exposing the mischievous conclusions of a book by Sir George Schuster and Mr. Guy Wint, the latest genealogical descendants of the "Empire-builders", the authors say: "If as Guy Wint suggests, the Congress is not a homogeneous organisation but a body of miscellaneous opinion held together by their common opposition to the British Raj then, as soon as that opposition is over and India becomes free, the Congress will fall to pieces and the various groups in it may seek fresh party alignments and party labels. When that happens, the Congress will no longer be there to impose its totalitarian will upon the Indian people, and the stage will be clear for sober statesmen to try all the constitutional experiments they want in a spirit of sweet reasonableness." But the primary inexorable condition for that happy consummation is the British withdrawal. They came as birds of passage and remained as birds of prey, "and the marks of their ravages have sunk deep into the face of this unfortunate land". The Muslims stayed not to exploit but to make the country their motherland and helped in producing a culture which is our "richest treasure". The only expiation for the "Great Refusal" of the British to settle in India is now to withdraw in dignity.

The authors have used the language of sociology and discussed in separate chapters the political, the sociological and the "irrational factors" of the communal problem, but it will be found that the three are but the branches of the same poison-tree, and the facts therefore of one chapter run into those of the other chapters. Thus the development of Muslim politics which has been treated in a separate chapter is bound up with the working of the "British arm of the Triangle" which has a chapter for itself, and it is again intimately connected with the sociological aspect of the problem to which a valuable chapter has been devoted. The same poison runs through all the aspects, for the simple reason that it is administered by the consummate masters of the art of divide and rule.

One wonders if the ordinary Muslim knows even a fraction of the history of the Muslim

The Communal Triangle in India: by Ashoka Mehta and Achyut Patwardhan, (Kitabistan, Allahabad) Rs. 4-8-0.

connection with the British. They were the *bete noir* of the British in the beginning of the nineteenth century, they were systematically shut out of the army, as "part of a deliberate policy to enfeeble a great community, to crush the spirit of a proud people"; in 1871 out of 2141 gazetted appointments in Bengal 711 were held by Hindus and 92 were held by Mussalmans; "a hundred and seventy years ago it was impossible for a well-born Mussalman in Bengal to be poor" wrote Dr. Hunter; "at present it is almost impossible for him to continue rich"; Persian and Arabic were "utterly untaught" in the schools, says Bowen, and "the curriculum was so designed as to estrange rather than interest the Muslim"; the tragic story of the Hooghly Trust which was so manipulated as to leave only a fraction of the millions of the trust for Muslim education; "they are a race ruined under the British rule," concluded Dr. Hunter. Well do our authors exclaim: "The Muslim League today is declaiming against the terrible 'atrocities' committed by the Congress Governments during the twenty-seven months that they were in office. It has, however, little to say about a Government which during a period of nearly a hundred years has perpetrated every injustice against the Muslim community. . . . You may take away by force all that a man possesses, and then call him magnanimous, you may do everything to sink him into the mire of poverty and ignorance and then talk of his culture, you may utterly ruin him and then call him a member of a great community. You may do all these things in India, for here unthinkable things are not only thinkable but do-able and often done."

A cold-blooded narration of the working of the British policy in India with the deliberate purpose of playing one community against the other demonstrates to the hilt the truth of the last sentence in the foregoing extract. "In the Montford Report, its distinguished authors expressed themselves against separate electorates, but nonetheless accepted them because of the Congress-League understanding. In 1933 the Communal Award was imposed for exactly the opposite reasons. In 1919 communalism was introduced because the two parties had agreed to it; in 1935 communalism was extended because the Hindus and the Muslims could not agree." The inexorable purpose throughout, of every detail of their policy, no matter how ludicrously inconsistent one may be from the other, is the crushing out of the spirit of nationalism and its strategic value in the perpetuation of the British heel. "The Government of India Act (1935) appreciably widened the franchise. 27.43 out of every 100 adult males in British India are voters. Here was material that nationalism could mobilize. The Government, however, took good care to frustrate such efforts. The electorate in 1919 was broken up into ten parts, now it is fragmented into seventeen unequal bits. Separate electorates were thrust, against their wishes, on women and the Indian Christians. The Hindu community was further weakened by giving separate representation to the scheduled classes.

Divisions on the basis of religion, occupation, and sex were made. Every possible cross-division was introduced." The share of every one of the Empire-builders, beginning with Mount Stuart Elphinstone, Lawrence, and Beck the original exponent of the two-nation theory, to Minto and Samuel Hoare — Lord Irwin's refusal to invite Dr. Ansari to the second Round Table Conference, and his mischievous Massey lecture might have been mentioned too — has been mentioned in its proper place. Amery and Cripps and Churchill and Attlee will deserve a special chapter in a second edition of the book. But the consummation was complete even before Amery and Co. came. The two-nation theory had been enunciated and tacitly accepted by the rulers and taken up as a war-cry by the misguided Mussalmans and Hindus.

That brings us to the brilliant chapters on the two nationalisms in India — the communal nationalism of the two rivals Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha and the democratic nationalism of the Indian National Congress — and the chapters on the Hindu Communalism and the movement for Pakistan. The authors have shown with ruthlessly impartial analysis how the illogicality of one communalism has provoked and stimulated the illogicality of the other; how their narrow self-interest has driven them from one impossible position into another; how the Muslim League shamelessly declares, 'we can go on multiplying the list' (not only of demands, but of 'atrocities' also) and how the Hindu Mahasabha sets up a board called the Hindu Militarization Mandal; how both are anxious for the Congress to fade out, so that the war of attrition exhausts both, destroys the Congress and leaves the field clear for the third Party. Both have no nobler urge than that of power politics, the one deluding itself with the will o' the wisp of a Hindudom meaning the maintenance, protection, and promotion of the Hindu race, Hindu culture, and Hindu civilisation, and the advancement of the glory of Hindu *rashtra*, and the other looking forward to the recreation of the exploded conception of a Muslim theocracy on the strength of methods and tactics which are aptly described as "spuriously Bismarckian" or Hitlerian.

As against this is the democratic nationalism of the Congress — which is not uni-national but broad-based on the fundamental rights of all India's diverse citizens — "recognising the need for nations to expand into peaceful federal units", eschewing violence and therefore all exploitation and "mercantilist adventures", — "as Mahatma Gandhi put it recently in his own inimitable way, Indians will go to Burma, but they will do so without guns". For, "only that nationalism can survive in the stress of the modern world which embraces federalism, is anchored in democracy and has an answer to the insistent challenge of war — viz., satyagraha . . . Lincoln condemned slavery because it degraded the master as much as the slave. The same could be said of modern warfare, for no matter how just your cause may be, war in the end will degrade it. One cannot fight the enemy without improving upon the enemy's weapons."

This last can alone be the foundation of a World Federation of Free States, whenever it can be formed. There are erudite chapters in the book on this and kindred subjects, but I must content myself with just a bare mention of them. In these days of spurious nationalisms which are at the root of all the welter of strife and bloodshed, it is something to see two socialist authors stand up for "a moral and political country" which, in the language of Burke, is "distinct from the geographical and which may possibly be in collision with it." "Nationalism," they declare, "has a meaning, it can enlist our allegiance only when its political and moral boundaries are co-terminous."

A question is asked: 'If Britain retires, would communal unity automatically come?' It will not come, for the simple reason that the several years' growth of poisonous weeds will have to be cleared and it may take some time, but the ground will be automatically created, and the poison-root removed, the weeds will not take long to be removed. It is in this work of removal of the weeds that constructive work will have to play a great part. The only hiatus that I have noticed in the book is a chapter surveying the work of those who have devoted themselves during the past twenty years to this task—not only of Gandhiji who fasted 21 days in order to awaken our consciences, but of numerous people like Appa Saheb Patwardhan who often risked their lives in the cause of unity. The epilogue devotes a para or two to methods of improving communal relations. But that is not enough. For only that kind of work will set unity on a firm foundation and prevent it from being wrecked again by outside third parties.

There is many an interesting feature of the book on which one would like to pause—the history of Hindu Muslim relations before the advent of the British, the numerous useful appendices containing facts and figures—but I must cut a long review short and commend the book to every Hindu and Muslim student for careful study. It is a distinct service rendered by the socialist friends and it deserves to be translated into every one of our provincial languages.

M. D.

The Late Dr. Datta

In Dr. Datta, Principal of Forman Christian College, the country has lost a staunch Christian nationalist. I had the privilege of knowing him intimately soon after my return from South Africa. He was an intimate friend of the late Deenabandhu Andrews and he would not be satisfied until he had brought me in touch with every one of his friends. Dr. Datta worked wholeheartedly day and night at the Unity Conference during the anxious time of my 21 days fast in 1924 in Delhi. I saw him again equally earnestly at work at the time of the second Round Table Conference. His loss at this critical juncture in the country's history would be doubly felt. I tender my condolences to Mrs. Datta. His numerous friends will share her sorrow.

Sevagram, 23-6-42

M. K. G.

REPLY TO SIR S. CRIPPS

In an interview by the representative of the United Press of London regarding Sir Stafford Cripps' statement published in the press Gandhiji said:

"I have read Sir Stafford Cripps' statement to the United Press representative in London. It is not conducive to the proper understanding between different parties, if ascertainable facts are not admitted by all. Sir Stafford knows that I was disinclined to proceed to New Delhi. Having gone there, I intended to return the same day that I reached there. But Maulana Saheb would not let me go. I wish that I could have induced the Working Committee to take up its stand on pure non-violence. But it did not and could not. With it, rightly, politics were all important and it could not, not having the conviction, allow its deliberations to be affected by the issue of non-violence. The deliberations, therefore, of the Working Committee at New Delhi were carried on without any interference or guidance on my part. Therefore, the negotiations had nothing to do at any stage with the question of non-violence. I would not have brought out this fact, if it was not relevant to a calm consideration of the situation that faces British and Indian statesmen.

"Nor do I like Sir Stafford's description of my appeal for withdrawal of the British power as a walk-out. The appeal has been made in no offensive mood. It is the friendliest thing that I could do. It is conceived in the interest of the Allied cause. I have made it in a purely non-violent spirit and as a non-violent step. But this is merely personal to me. It is necessary to remember in considering my proposal that it is essentially a non-violent gesture. Such non-violence as India has or may have becomes impotent without the withdrawal of the British power—even as that part of India which will put up an armed fight becomes impotent. The step that I have conceived overcomes all difficulties, shuts all controversy about violence and non-violence and immediately frees India to offer her best help to the Allied cause and more especially to China which is in imminent danger. I am convinced that the independence of India, which the withdrawal of the British power involves, would ensure China's freedom and put the Allied cause on an unassailable basis."

Sevagram, 19-6-42

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